# Chapter 2
# Digital Influencers and Follower Behavior:
## An Exploratory Study

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## ABSTRACT

*The advent of new technologies, the massification of internet access, the availability of personal computers in the market, and the entrance of smartphones into citizens' daily lives all have constituted a revolution that has led to a change in consumer behavior. There is no need for an empirical study, since it is enough to enter some social networks to observe that companies are using these networks as a marketing vehicle. Digital marketing constitutes a great tool to attract new clients and customers, be it by means of content or paid advertisements in browsers, blogs, videos, Instagram, etc. Hence, the aim of this study is to understand the role and importance of digital influencers in consumers' daily lives. For this, the authors developed an exploratory, quantitative, observational, and transversal study based on a non-probabilistic sample, composed of 161 individuals who integrated or interacted with someone who integrated the academic community of a higher education institution.*

# INTRODUCTION

According to Kotler (2000), marketing is seen as the task of creating, promoting and providing goods and services to clients and customers, and thus its goal is to find means to connect product benefits to people's interests. The main purpose of marketing is to help organizations achieve their goals, since companies make money from meeting clients' needs better than their competitors.

According to the American Marketing Association (2013), marketing is defined as a set of activities and processes of creation, communication, delivery and exchange of offers which are valued by clients, customers, partners, and by society in general.

In a nutshell, marketing is a process seeking to understand the target audience's needs so as to promote sales. Primarily, marketing consists of a continuous market research process within which the company acts or intends to act in the future, therefore conducting an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and market changes and trends.

It is currently impossible to talk about marketing and ignore that most of the world population are connected to the internet and shop online. Such technological support has quickly transformed traditional marketing into digital marketing. This digital marketing can be defined as the 'set of activities that a company (or individual) executes online with the aim to attract new business, create new relationships and develop a brand identity' (Peçanha, 2019).

Digital marketing has transformed the way business and other organizations communicate with their audiences. The 5Ds of digital marketing (digital devices, digital platforms, digital media, digital data and digital technology) can be used, alongside traditional marketing techniques, to get closer to audiences than ever before (Dave and Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).

Nowadays, social media content has been used by various brands for competing with their competitors, promoting products and offers, and maintaining a reputation among the stakeholders (Brennan and Croft, 2012, Chen, 2013).

This is the background for our research work, which in terms of structure will develop from this introduction into the review of literature on social networks and the marketing within such networks. Subsequently, we define digital influencers and their power to influence behavioral change. The following section gives an account of the research method used in this study, namely the survey, focusing on its structure as well as on the target population. Finally, the results and conclusions are presented in light of the research data obtained, the limitations of the study are identified, and further works are put forward.

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